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TO : The Secretary  
THROUGH: S/S  
FROM : INR - Roger Hilsman

The Soviet military leadership is using the 45th anniversary of the Soviet army in a massive effort, highlighted by a speech by Marshal Malinovsky, to restore the image of Soviet military superiority over the United States. Since the fall of 1961, this image has been severely tarnished by American disclosures concerning relative military strength and, most dramatically, by the Cuban crisis.

Support for Cuba. Malinovsky's commitment to support	DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/WR
Cuba in case of aggression by the	US does not go beyond
Khrushchev's previous statements,	REVIEWED BY <u>Wickham</u> DATE <u>12/12/66</u>
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psychological sense, at least, it should not be minimized. The Soviets are of course aware from their intelligence at any given point of actual US preparations for an invasion and the latest threats are undoubtedly made in relative certainty that no invasion is planned or imminent. In part, Malinovsky's warning may be designed to deter a US military response to hostile action against US reconnaissance flights over Cuba.

Other Possible Soviet Purposes. Moscow almost certainly feels some need, vis-a-vis Castro, the Chinese, the US and others, to dispel any impression that the promised withdrawal of certain Soviet forces from Cuba is an act of weakness. (Soviet media so far have been totally silent on this subject; Peking promptly reported yesterday's White House statement.) Additionally, the bellicose Soviet statements may be designed to rebut Chinese allegations of Soviet softness toward the US, more of which may be impending in the anticipated Chinese response to recent Soviet pronouncements on the Sino-Soviet dispute.

As usual, the Soviet marshals, while making extravagant boasts, also stress the military dangers confronting the USSR and thus maintain their claims to a large portion of Soviet economic resources. The Soviet people are put on notice that military cutbacks, and corresponding benefits to the civilian sector, are not in prospect.

To what extent Moscow's muscle-flexing may be related to the uncompromising Soviet stance in Geneva is difficult to determine. In a forthcoming Research Memorandum we will examine the possibility that a more general "hardening" of the Soviet posture toward the US is underway.

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